

Stamford Bridge Club

Ducking & the Danger Hand

Wednesday, 4th March 2015

Preamble

Session on declarer play looking to guarantee the contract (consider overtricks as unimportant)

Ducking – a definition

“Deliberately losing an early trick in a suit”

In other words we can win that trick but choose not to

Several reasons for this. Today we’re looking at two of them

Reason 1

To sever the defensive communication so that we restrict the defence’s ability to take tricks.

(Talk Hand 1)

Reason 2

To protect a vulnerable suit holding from attack.

We distinguish between:

Safe hand – we’re happy for this defender to be on lead

Danger hand – we’re unhappy for this defender to be on lead

Technique

We try to duck a trick into the safe hand (often by way of taking a finesse into that hand)

Such play are known as

Avoidance plays – plays where we keep a particular defender off lead

(Talk Hand 2)

Some examples of vulnerable suit holdings (assume we're playing in no trumps but points can still be valid for suit contracts)

[**Danger hand**; **safe hand**];

	♠ K 7 2	
♠ Q J 4		♠ A 10 9 6
	♠ 8 5 3	

If West is on lead, the defence can take four spade tricks. If West doesn't lead a spade and we can make our contract without needing a spade trick we'll try to lose any tricks to East to protect the king of spades from attack.

	♠ 7 4 2	
♠ K 9 8 6		♠ J 10 5 3
	♠ A Q	

If West leads a spade we have a second trick in the suit. If we receive a non-spade lead and we can make our contract without needing a second spade trick we'll try to lose any lead to West. We have protected ♠ Q from attack.

	♠ 7 4	
♠ A 10 6 5 3		♠ Q 8 2
	♠ K J 9	

West leads ♠5 to ♠4, ♠Q and our ♠K. If East gains the lead that hand can push a spade through our vulnerable ♠ J 9 holding and the defence will take four tricks in the suit. We'll try to organise the play to keep East off lead.

	♠ 9 8	
♠ A J 7 4 2		♠ 10 6 3
	♠ K Q 5	

West leads ♠4 to ♠8, ♠10 and ♠Q. If East later gains the lead he can play a spade through the delicate ♠ Q 5 holding and the defence will come to four tricks. If we can only lose the lead to West we'll protect the spades from further attack.

♠ 9 6

♠ Q 10 7 4 2

♠ K 8 5

♠ A J 3

Sometimes the manner in which we develop another suit may determine how we play a suit. If we're going to play on another suit such that East will win a trick in that suit then we should duck two rounds of spades and win the third. East is exhausted of spades and West cannot take the fourth and fifth cards as winners.

If we're going to play another suit whereby West will win a trick there we'll win the first trick as ♠ J is protected from attack.

Most hands this morning concentrate on "Reason 2" ducking

So, in such cases:

Identify the vulnerable suit holding

Plan and organise the play to protect that holding from attack